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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/905,804	07/13/2001	Christopher Philip Bewick-Sonntag	8638	7355

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EXAMINER

ANDERSON, CATHARINE L

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3761

DATE MAILED: 07/05/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

## Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/905,804

Applicant(s)

BEWICK-SONNTAG ET AL.

Examiner

C. Lynne Anderson

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

### Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 13 April 2005.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-10, 21 and 22 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-10, 21 and 22 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 11 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

### Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

### Attachment(s)

- ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Response to Arguments***

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 21 and 22 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

In response to the applicant's argument that Wada fails to disclose a substance for maintaining the topsheet in contact with the wearer, it is noted that the tackiness and stickiness of the surfactant coated on the surface of the topsheet would aid in maintaining contact between the topsheet and the wearer.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 21 and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Wada et al. (6,436,081).

Wada discloses a body contacting topsheet 5 for an absorbent article 1, as shown in figure 1. The topsheet 5 comprises a web, as disclosed in column 4, lines 1-4, which is capable of being stretched, and therefore is extensible. The topsheet 5 has a plurality of ridges 8 and valleys 7, as shown in figure 2. The topsheet 5, and therefore

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at least some of the ridges, are treated with a surfactant, as disclosed in column 4, lines 8-9, which would increase the friction between the topsheet and the wearer's skin, thus aiding in maintaining the topsheet in contact with the wearer's body.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1 and 3-10 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wada et al. (6,436,081).

Wada discloses all aspects of the claimed invention but remains silent as to the degree of extensibility and caliper change of the topsheet. Wada discloses a body contacting topsheet 5 for an absorbent article 1, as shown in figure 1. The topsheet 5 comprises a non-absorbent hydrophobic or hydrophilic material, as disclosed in column 4, lines 4-5. The topsheet 5 is provided with elastic members 10 which are attached to the topsheet 5 in a stretched state, as disclosed in column 4, lines 45-55. The topsheet 5 may therefore be extended from the contracted state shown in figure 8. When a material is stretched, it naturally undergoes a decrease in caliper to accommodate the stretching. It would therefore be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention for the topsheet of Wada to have an extensibility of at least 30% under a force of 50 g, and a caliper change of at least 30%, since it has been held that where the

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general conditions of the claim are disclosed in the prior art (i.e. the extensibility of the topsheet), finding the optimum or workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art.

With respect to claim 3, the topsheet 5 is three-dimensionally shaped, as shown in figure 1.

With respect to claims 4 and 5, the amount of the topsheet 5 present above a place that passes through 0.3 mm below the highest point 8 of the topsheet 5 is less than about 15% of the total, and the amount present above 0.4 mm is less than 40%, as shown in the cross-section figure 2 and determined from the height 8h disclosed in column 4, line 65 to column 5, line 6.

With respect to claim 6, the topsheet 5 has an irregular surface structure, as shown in figure 8.

With respect to claim 7, the topsheet 5 comprises a nonwoven web, as disclosed in column 4, lines 1-4, which is mechanically altered by the addition of the elastic members.

With respect to claim 8, the nonwoven web has a plurality of corrugations loosely formed therein, as shown in figure 8.

With respect to claim 9, the crotch portion of the absorbent article will contact the interlabial space of a female wearer.

With respect to claim 10, the topsheet 5 further comprises apertures, as disclosed in column 6, lines 27-32.

***Allowable Subject Matter***

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Claim 11 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

### ***Double Patenting***

A rejection based on double patenting of the "same invention" type finds its support in the language of 35 U.S.C. 101 which states that "whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process ... may obtain a patent therefor ..." (Emphasis added). Thus, the term "same invention," in this context, means an invention drawn to identical subject matter. See *Miller v. Eagle Mfg. Co.*, 151 U.S. 186 (1894); *In re Ockert*, 245 F.2d 467, 114 USPQ 330 (CCPA 1957); and *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970).

A statutory type (35 U.S.C. 101) double patenting rejection can be overcome by canceling or amending the conflicting claims so they are no longer coextensive in scope. The filing of a terminal disclaimer cannot overcome a double patenting rejection based upon 35 U.S.C. 101.

Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 as claiming the same invention as that of claim 1 of prior U.S. Patent No. 6,635,799. This is a double patenting rejection.

The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and, *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

Claims 1 and 3-10 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-10 of U.S.

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Patent No. 6,635,799. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because all limitations of the instant claims are disclosed in the patented claims.

### ***Conclusion***

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to C. Lynne Anderson whose telephone number is (571) 272-4932. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Larry Schwartz can be reached on (571) 272-4390. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

*CWA*

cla

June 26, 2005



Larry I. Schwartz  
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